105 /104 cont./
abduction, they practice the couvade, there is segregation of the woman during menstruation, there are initiation ceremonies for the boys who have reached puberty, and there is social stratification with castes.

177 [797] Since the arrival of the religious Missionary and the rubber worker in the region, two important phenomena have occurred. The most significant and most noticeable one is the rapid incorporation and diffusion of occidental material culture. The aluminum pot has replaced the pottery bowl, trousers have replaced the loincloth, the cotton dress has taken the place of the tree-bark skirt, hunting is no longer done with bow and arrow, but with a shotgun, and fishing is more often done with the fish-hook than with the trap.

[182] [797] [584] [601] [595] [178] In the field of spiritual culture the influence of occidental culture has been more subtle and not so rapidly accepted. It is certain that the system of social organization is suffering a process of disintegration; the Indian who wishes to have a woman must be willing to settle in a mission, because the Missionaries have shrewdly gathered together all the women of marriageable age and have taken them to the Missions; the kinship terms no longer correspond to the present system; very few Indians still practice polyandry; but in spite of all this evidence, an adult Tukano Indian of today has not stopped thinking according to the typical Tukano mental processes. For example, Manuel Sierra, our interpreter, in spite of having lived for four consecutive years with his wife in the Departamento del Tolima, in Central Colombia, and in spite of having left the Vaupés at 17 years of age, still has the /105/ conviction that having eaten fish after the birth of his son without a Tukano shaman's having "blown" the food beforehand was the cause of the appearance of ulcers on his legs.

[262] [753] [178]

773 177 [128] [014] The Tukano cosmogony presented below shows clearly the phenomenon of the transculturation. The short time available for this first journey of contact with Tukano culture did not permit us to check this cosmogony with other informants. Our informant, Marcos Sierra, is a shaman in the settlement of Guadalajara, on the Paca River.

115 756

/68 cont./

165 d) Unfortunately, however, the index of child mortality is still very high. Prior to the establishment of hospitals and [797] ambulatories by the Salesian Missions, about 50 per cent of the children from 2 to 10 years of age died because of the lack of hygiene.

164 More alarming still is the danger of tuberculosis. Sent by the Colombian government, in August of 1955 the phthisiologist Dr. Alvaro Arguillo Pinzon visited the populations of the Uaupés and Papurí. Soon after his visit to this latter river, at the povoados of the Colombian bank as well of the Brazilian one, he affirmed to us in Iauareté that 75 per cent of the indigenous population was already infected by the Koch bacillus. The affirmation is painfully true. Not only are the Indians ignorant of the simplest standards of hygiene suitable to the case (they live together in the same environment filled with carbonic anhydride from the always lighted fire, they sleep on the same hammock, put their dirty hands in the common food, drink from the same cuia /gourd container/, consume the remains of the food of the tubercular, sip the drinks chewed perhaps by some infected person, etc.), but also to their mentality the observance of the precautions required by the sickness is excluded. As a matter [753] of fact, they do not believe in sicknesses; they consider themselves immortal. The sicknesses are evils caused by some enemy, and only the pajé /curer-sorcerer/ with his magic practices (practices that in reality often contribute only to making the ailment worse) is able to eliminate them. For [797] this reason, they do not subject themselves to long treatment in the Mission hospitals, to which, ordinarily, they retreat voluntarily and with the permission of the relatives only after having uselessly tried the treatments of various pajés, already in the last days of life. In recent years a considerable proportion of deaths, mainly of adults, has had as causa mortis laryngeal and pulmonary tuberculosis.

/267 cont./

e) Medicine.

755 1) Origin of the sicknesses.

*[192] Their knowledge in this sector has been hurt by magic and superstition. Although the nature that surrounds him is prodigal, the native scarcely uses home remedies, because of his concept of the sicknesses, under the influence of the xamã /shaman/ or pajé (11).

11. In the account of the voyage of 1637 by Pe. Alonso de Rojas ("Descobrimentos do Rio das Amazonas /Discoveries of the Amazon River/," p. 110), we find: -- "They fear /this footnote is continued on the next page in the original source/ the sorcerers, whom they consult, and the latter fear the devil, from whom they receive oracles, and, with lies, they fool the miserable Indians."

• 753 /268/ They hide their sicknesses as much as possible. They do not know of the existence of pathogenic germs or of the chemical-biological action of the organism and the poisons that act upon it. Their logical mind, on the other hand, demands an explanation for the facts, it is certain that the effects demand a proportional cause. As the obvious forces of nature exist, they admit that there are, moreover, occult forces capable of producing the most varied and strange phenomena. Nor can the meteorological and astronomical phenomena fail to impress them. The Indian, besides, is a convinced animist, as we shall see later. All the sicknesses, for him, have only one cause, however varied their manifestations may be, to wit, the dohasé, which we could translate as malefice (12).

*[192]

[754] 12. Like many among the civilized, they believe in witchcraft, evil eye, charms, enchantment, voodoo. A consequence of

/268 cont./

• 753

/footnote 12 cont./ this opinion about the sicknesses will be no hygiene or preventive measures at all, hence the spread, for example, of malaria, grippe, tuberculosis, etc., as is reported for various occasions and places.

That is, the sicknesses are caused by the malevolent spirit of the men who, by envying (one of the weak points of the forest-dweller's psyche) their fellow men, endeavor to do them some harm. For that, they can use the most varied objects turned malefic by magic: a lock of hair, a piece of cloth, wood, stone, metal, bone, thorn, very commonly a cigar butt (13),

13. Every time that, upon digging in a spot, a cigar butt is found, the Indian immediately thinks that it is a matter of a malefice.

and even the mere thought. The malefic objects will act when placed on the individual's path, inside his house, buried in his yard, or thrown on his landing place or his canoe.

*[192] [115]

They believe that (information from the tuxaua Júlio from Pari-cachoeira, river Tiquié) mysterious beings, whom they call Waĩ maxsã̃ (fish people) might have spread germs of sickness under the stones of the rivers; thus they talk about seré-pá (stone of purú-puru /skin disease/), yohá-pá (stone of dysentery). For this reason, they oppose breaking these stones, because such sicknesses would spread and decimate the population. They assert concerning some stones of Pari-cachoeira that even the fish die when they lie against them (14).

[115]

14. One of the Missionary Brothers gave a likely explanation for the fact: the existence there of numerous piranhas, which attack the other fish.

/269/

753 The cause of a local pain, inflammation or fever can also
755 be one of those malefic objects which has been introduced into the organism. The cure, naturally, is only to be obtained with the elimination of the object located in the sick part or the elimination of the malefice. Since it reached the organism mysteriously, by a magic process, only another magic process will be able to bring about the cure. And here the "sorcerer" or "xamã" /shaman/, called in Tukano Yaí (pajé), comes into action (15).

[192]

15. Yaí also means onça /jaguar/. Might there perhaps be some connection between the two concepts? The Indians could not tell us. The Ethnologists grant it.

753 They also think that the civilized, in order to do them harm,
829 send them malefice (grippe, etc.) inside the boxes of merchandise, which, upon being opened, will infect many people or the whole povoado (16).

[648]

16. In the Tukano povoado of S. Luzia (river Papuri) the daughter of the tuxaua had died of whooping cough (1947). Envying the Makú, who were well paid for the curare acquired in order to be studied in the south of Brazil, there was immediately a rumor that the sicknesses were prepared by the civilized with the curare of the Makú and sent to S. Luzia with the merchandise.

761 From this persuasion concerning the malevolent and magic origin of the sicknesses is born the conviction that every death has as its author an inimical person. It is, therefore, violent; man by nature is immortal. It is a vain effort to try to convince a feeble old man that he is going to die and it is advisable to prepare himself. Such a mental attitude, obviously, is not favorable to suicide, although one might perhaps find some old

/274 cont./

755 [533] [534] often accompanied by the sound of the maracá (Yaxsã-ga), regarded as a magic instrument.

[192] Maracá (yaxsã-ga)

The development of this suggestive process is facilitated by various causes. The first one is the mental attitude of the Indian. Then perhaps the natural medicinal effect of the treatment, and coincidences which the Indian will take as a cause. It seems, moreover, that in some cases it is a matter of an unconscious hypnotism, maybe even spontaneous telepathy and magnetic force. Facts of singular telepathic manifestation and others that are amazing and escape any explanation on our part are known (23).

[797] [753] 23. In Iauareté the pajés said that under the foundation of the church was buried a malefic cigar, which would attack the faithful with its emanations. Several cases of tuberculosis actually appeared among the natives, explained, naturally, as the effect of the emanations from the cigar. In Teresita, formerly a Mission of the Montfortian Padres and today of the Instituto of the Missões Estrangeiras /Foreign Missions/ of Yarumal, on the Papurí River (Colombia), six brothers, strong men, died in less than three years, from the malifice, they say, of the Pirá-tapúya Pajé of Umurutinga.

756 731 /275/ It might also happen that in serious cases of illnesses, epidemics, or storms the pajé will invite other colleagues to form a "medical junta."

/280 cont./

756 the vengeance is likewise wreaked against them (32).

32. Some assert that poison cannot be administered to the pajé. "He sees even from far away." This belief is advantageous to the pajés. It seems, nevertheless, that, at least nowadays, not everyone endorses it. In October of 1946, [753] a native from Ipanuré died of pneumonia. They attributed the sickness and death to the pajé from the neighboring povoado of Cigarro. When this pajé, with some persons from his povoado, were given the job of transporting some of our luggage through the varadouro /open passage through the forest/ of the cachoeira of Ipanuré, the Indians of this locality abandoned the work, hid in the forest, and, when the pajé passed by on the road, one of the men from Ipanuré gave him a blow with a stick, which he avoided, turning his head and covering it with his arm, which was broken at the elbow and forearm.

His presence in the vicinity of a povoado at night, when he goes to do his fishing, is always suspicious. If after one of his visits to /281/ some maloca (especially of another tribe) some death or misfortune happens there, the pajé will be blamed (33).

33. In a maloca of Jandú, on the igarapé Umarí, tributary of the Tiquié, shortly before our passing through there (December of 1947), [821] lightning had struck. The pajé, who had threatened to hurl a bolt of lightning there, was blamed for the misfortune.

[627] Some pajés have found themselves obliged to abandon the povoados and stay away for a long time, until the anger against them had lessened.

/288 cont./

757 Scorning all precautions, they will not hesitate to pour out the remedy that displeases them; if, on the other hand, it has a pleasing flavor, they will take it all at once, or divide it between the sick and the healthy. A bottle of syrup will be consumed with flour in a few minutes.

5) Home remedies.

753 In some cases some means of cure for certain sicknesses, or means of preventing them, are indicated without recourse to the pajé. It is not so much a weakening of his prestige, as,it seems to us, medicinal magic. They teach, for instance, that the fish surubí harms anyone who has a wound; and the fruit cubiú, anyone who has impaludism. If someone eats the fish piraíba, his vision will suffer, etc.

[192]

192 The best-known home remedies are (44):

278 752 [115]

44. We obtained this list from the Hungarian Ladislau Auer, who has lived for several years among the tribes of the Uaupés.

a) For wounds: Recent ones. They boil the bark of the cipo dyí-dá (cipo of blood) and apply the water to the wound. Or they also apply to wounds scrapings from the potato known as Kamĩ bũxkõ-Ro-kó (remedy against sores).

Old ones. They wash them many times with the water in which has been boiled the water-edge cipo called Mõõ õx'sé-ka-poarí (paraiba whiskers).

/289/ b) Against snake bite. 1st. Of jararaca: they crush the leaves and the yellowish root of a shrub called precisely Aña-kó, jararaca remedy, and for this reason they cultivate it in the clearings. They apply them to the bites, and the sap or infusion of these leaves is also given as a drink. A variety of black root has an even more vigorous action. They also use the infusion of the sororoca root against the poison of the jararaca.

/330 cont./

776 Even burned, his spirit still survives, wandering through the forests, taking strange and frightening shapes. To him they attribute all the misfortunes, both the material ones, such as a storm, the destruction of the forest (26),

> 26. Large clearings are frequently found in the forest. It is a matter of tall and thick trees, but with superficial roots, which fall under the force of the hurricanes, dragging many others with them. They attribute this noise and the falling of the trees to wãx-tʃ.

a harmful animal in the clearing, and the personal ones: the
* 192 defect of stuttering, madness, etc. They call the mad person
• 753 wãx-tʃ dohõnõkõ, that is, hurt by wãx-[illegible] They call tuber-
776 culosis wãx-tʃ poá-ri, hair /Port. cab[illegible] wãx-tʃ (27).

> 27. The cause of tuberculosis, according to what they think, is butterfly hairs /Port. pêlos, hairs, down, colors/ in the throat. The pajé blows on the mingau in order to invoke the "wãx-tʃ of the butterflies," so that it will not trouble the patient.

[755]

776 The fear of wãx-tʃ that they feel is such that not for any prize will they venture to enter the forest at night, or even during the day in certain dark igarapés. And they go so far as to abandon their clearings for years, because they heard strange noises there.

191 b) Boraró or Curupira (28).

776

> 28. Through relations with the travelers (many of whom speak Nheengatú) the natives know many terms of the língua geral. Just

/334 cont./

771 e) Cult practices.

1) Local cult (litobolia).

There are no temples, that is, buildings solely dedicated to the deity, where the religious functions are performed. Nor has it been reported that there is any private cult or individual worship of the deity, ceremonies, prayers, unless as cult one understands some practices that seem to us magical, such as litobolia.

823 They treat some places with respect and fear; this is
821 tabooism. One does not see there, however, manifestations of cult, individual or social. Such are, for example, some cachoeiras and stones. And about them, in general, they tell interesting legends. They do not allow stones to be taken from such cachoeiras (35),

[797] 35. The Bishop Dom José Domitrovitsch
[753] thought of dynamiting the cachoeira of Parí-cachoeira, in order to facilitate navigation. The local population became agitated, and the tuxaua Julio came to advise him not to do it, because otherwise fevers and sickness would come. The Bishop judged it more expedient not to go against the opinion of the Indians. Brother Mateo (of the Congregation of Montfort), at one of these rocks of the cachoeira of the thunder, Bũxpó-pweã, of the igarapé Cuiú-cuiú, tributary of the Papurí, removed a fine splinter, in order to extract a little honey. One of the Indians warned him that he should not do that, because "lightning will strike." And, to his great surprise, lightning did strike at some distance, when absolutely nothing indicated it; it was really "un fulmine a ciel sereno" /a bolt of lightning in a clear sky/. They

/334 cont./

823
821
• [753]

/footnote 35 cont./ explain the outbreak of malaria that in 1931-2 decimated the population of Taracuá-ponta, river Uaupés, as the consequence of having taken a stone from the cachoeira of the beijú, Ahũ-gã-pweá, actually located some hundreds of kilometers away, on the river Papurí.

asserting that, if someone were to try it, lightning would strike him. It is on some of these rocks that they go to finish the making of their canoe, or the preparation of their nets and fishing gear (36).

[227]
[501]

36. There is one of these rocks near the povoado of Parí-cachoeira, river Tiquié.

784
823
[103]

/335/ Near the "igarapé of the caterpillar," pixkõ-rõ-ỹa, headwaters of the Cuiú-cuiú, tributary of the Papurí, there is a rock that a woman should not see; if she looks at this rock, she will never have children. And when they go by this place, the women and maidens turn their faces to the other side. Fish from this and from some other igarapés cannot be eaten; if somebody were to do it, he would suffer from toothache.

823
[103]
*[192]

In Jabutí-cachoeira, on the river Tiquié, there is a rock called nõ'mya-ga (rock of the women, or rock woman?) with a groove that looks like a vulva to the natives. When the young men go by there, they throw a piece of beijú, a lemon, or some other fruit at it from their canoe. It is what they call doxké-sã-i'ãsé, that is, they throw to hit the mark. Because, they explain, if the object thrown remains in the groove, they will soon have wives. This rock, for them, is very precious. They also think that, by rubbing the hand over it, later they will easily learn any trade.

5: Goldman E-5 (1939-1940) 1963
SQ19 Tucano SQ19
Cubeo

Strongest feelings and strongest actions are provoked by sorcery. Most illness and death is attributed to the evil designs of medicine men, or laymen who command the arts of sorcery or of administering mysterious poisons. The Cubeo fear of sorcery and of "poisoning" is acute. They are aroused not only by the illness or death of a sibmate or of a sibmate's wife, but they anticipate that he who has injured or killed one is determined to kill them all. They vow a violent death to sorcerers either by direct action or by retaliatory sorcery. In all the cases I heard of, the accused sorcerer left in time and when he returned anger against him had evaporated. Countersorcery was the most common form of retaliation. There are also men who allegedly wander about at night killing or troubling people at random. When caught, such men are said to be torn to shreds with fishhooks and then abandoned to die of their wounds.

Fig. 7. *Bahúkiwa* headman.

5: Goldman E-5 (1939-1940) 1963
SQ19 Tucano SQ19
CUBEO

larly, they have adapted harvest and demon cult ceremonies to ancestral cult rites. Evidences of religious syncretism are important in interpreting a complex ceremony. Thus, the fact that the mourning rites commonly begin during the pupunha season and the fact that at one point in the ceremonies the men pelt the roof of the house with pupunha fruit to "frighten the women" must be evaluated in the light of the possibility that we are dealing with a portion of a foreign ceremony, incorporated in the structure of the *óyne*. Cubeo ancestral or initiative rites also include "harvest festival" elements. But in these, as in the *óyne*, the harvest theme is a minor one.

MASK REPRESENTATIONS

Dr. Koch-Grünberg, in his travels through the Vaupés region, collected some 50 different mask representations. My own observations along the Cuduiarí covered 30. Altogether, there is now a combined list of 62.[1] Since the masks are intended to portray *all* the living creatures of the Cubeo world the number of masks is potentially vast. No one ceremony uses them all. There are, however, key characters that are most commonly represented. These are Jaguar, Dung beetle, Carrion vulture, Butterfly, Aracú fishes, Eagle, Sloth, Parrot, Dragonfly, Minnows (who are not masked but are an important element in the ceremonial dramatization), *Pyénkũ* (a small black fish), Frogs, and a variety of cannibalistic ogres or forest demons, the *Abũhuwa*. Informants would not say which of the masked representations was most important, presumably because invidiousness is, to the Cubeo, in poor taste. Judging, however, by their prominence, I would say that Jaguar, Butterfly, *Abũhuwa*, Dung beetles, Carrion vulture, and Aracú fishes were most important, more or less in that order. Except for the aracú, the esteemed fish of the region, these creatures all have an association with death. The jaguar is, of course, the dreaded sorcerer. The sorcerer is called *yaví* (jaguar) and the Cubeo regard any jaguar as likely to be either a sorcerer or a sorcerer's dog. The morpho butterfly with its beautiful blue wings is a creature of sorcerers and of evil. The information Koch-Grünberg received was that the morpho butterfly (*tatárako*) lives at Yuruparí *cachoeira* on the Vaupés, where he brews malaria in a calabash and strews it over the land (1909, II, 181). I did not hear this account, but I was told that when a sorcerer is cooking a brew that will kill a victim at a distance the morpho butterfly appears and encircles the pot. Finally, it falls in and is consumed and at that moment the victim dies.

[1] See the end of this chapter.

5: Goldman E-5 (1939-1940) 1963
SQ19 Tucano SQ19
CUBEO

bidinous nocturnal hunter, and not in the sun. The sun, they say, is merely the moon giving heat and light during the day, "when people need it." As sun, *avyd* lacks anthropomorphic character. The interest of the Cubeo in the moon rather than in the sun seems related to their concept of nightfall as the sacred time. Almost all ceremonies are night ceremonies, whereas daylight is the time for work. Apart from his erotic role the moon is a hunter with a stone-tipped spear (*temúdjo*). Bits of the blade chip off which the finder can use as potent sorcery magic, killing his victim by poisoning. The moon is also an opener of graves of those who eat a seed the Cubeo call *óthai* and which is used as fish bait. The Cubeo tell the story of the man who hoped to steal the lamp of the moon (*djuwaibo*) by covering it with a pottery dish. Some light showed and *avyd* secured the lamp to the back of his neck and flew off.

When there is an eclipse of the moon, the Cubeo say that the spirits of the dead are being dispersed. They also fear that the moon is dying. As the moon reddens I have witnessed them running about shouting to one another in genuine terror that the moon is dying. They believe that those who live in the direction from which the eclipse shadow is moving will die. The moon sickens of the same sorcery afflictions that beset humans, although they do not believe that one of their medicine men has the power to sicken the moon.

HUMAN SPIRITS

The soul is called *umé*, which also means "breath" and "breeze."[2] As a spirit entity the soul is referred to as *umémakü* (or *umémako*). The soul leaves the body during dreams, returning as the dreamer awakes. The *Bahúkiwa*, at least those with whom I discussed the subject, did not believe that the *umé* might fail to return and so cause death. Death and illness result, they insisted, from something entering the body. At death, the *umé* leaves the body permanently, journeying after a suitable interval to a nearby river, dwelling of the spirits. After death the *umé* has human form. It can be heard talking and can be seen by the shaman. The spirits of people who have been adulterers, uncooperative, breakers of the bonds of ritual friendship, or in any other way markedly unsocial assume an animal

pomorphic beliefs about the sun. Linguistic evidence suggests also that the concept of sun and of time is built around the notion of visibility. Thus, direction, having nothing to do with visibility, is based on the *avyd* form.

[2] Koch-Grünberg (1915–16) also noted *umédo* (pulse) and *umédo* (heart). I believe that the connotation of the term is revealed by the verb *umédani*, which means "to get up," "to rise."

551 nowers, but when asking a Tukáno his name we would be given a Spanish one or nothing at all. Possibly the reason for this was that by saying his name aloud an Indian might call back the spirit of an ancestor who had the same name, or worse, by telling us he might have given us power to work evil over him. Incidentally they would usually ask ours, which we would give them – to their obvious amusement, possibly owing to the strange sound which they would find almost unpronounceable.

152 752 An Indian will show a stoical indifference to a wound in fighting or an accident while hunting. On one occasion a man was brought to us with his hand full of gunshot. He had been carrying his old carbine through the [123] forest by the muzzle! We spent nearly two hours cleaning the wound and picking out the shot, while he chatted away to his brother seemingly unconcerned. Yet when suffering from a less obvious ailment an Indian is often • 753 convinced that someone has worked evil on him. Should death occur, his relations must seek revenge on whoever is responsible. On the occasion of [123] Watsora's death our own position was extremely unsure, particularly when Kuarumey departed on the following morning to visit the shaman.

It seems in retrospect extraordinary that we were ever allowed to con- 756 tinue our journey. For the shaman once consulted has to find a victim on 123 whom he can place the blame for an ailment or death – in this case both, in the same house, the one in which we were guests. What better subject could he have had, the visiting white man, regarded with suspicion by the Indians, and uninvited? Barely two decades earlier the Indians of the Piraparaná showed no compunction in killing *caucheros* who interfered in their lives. Surely their views could not have changed so radically, in so short a time, to make ourselves an exception to the rule.

764 Perhaps the most noticeable thing about Watsora's burial was the speed with which she was buried and the fact that this was done within the *maloca*. [775] This could be accounted for by the fear that the body might be whisked away and eaten – some of these tribes were once cannibals – and then the spirit could never escape to the afterlife. Also, once buried, there was no indication as to where they had placed the body.

614 Like most of the Amazonian tribes the Tukano have no real central authority or clan cohesion. The authority, such as it is, is invested in the heads of families. These composite families seldom number more than twenty to thirty people, usually far less. In the past clans have united to fight a common enemy. At the turn of the century one chieftain south of the Apaporis organized a small army of clans to fight the encroaching white *caucheros* and to kill any Indians found collaborating with them, but this was an exceptional case.

[756] Even the head of the clan or family has only a semblance of authority, though there are exceptions, and often less power than the shaman. This lack of leadership combined with a preference for isolation – which may be